

Message Text

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45

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 USIE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 NEA-10 AF-10 IO-15 PM-07

NSC-10 SS-15 DRC-01 EURE-00 /112 W

----- 065940

P R 101756Z OCT 73

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3888

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY BONN

USMISSION NATO

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY ROME

USEC BRUSSELS 8602

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 PARIS 26437

DEPT PASS USIA FOR IAE

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: PFOR

SUBJECT: FRENCH PRESS AND MIDEAST WAR

SUMMARY: APART FROM VOLUMINOUS FACTUAL AND PHOTOS COVERAGE OF WAR IN ALL BRANCHES OF PRESS, FRENCH COMMENTATORS AS OF OCTOBER 10 ARE SOUNDING SEVERAL THEMES: (1) WAR WILL BE LONG AND TOUGH AND MAY HAVE NO VICTOR, WHILE WESTERN INTERESTS WILL SUFFER. (2) SECURITY COUNCIL IS PUTTING ON ANOTHER DISPLAY OF IMPOTENCE AND DIVERGENCE, WITH WASHINGTON AND MOSCOW SEEKING TO LIMIT THE DAMAGE, NOT SOLVE THE PROBLEM; FOR THEM, PRESERVATION OF THEIR DETENTE IS WHAT REALLY MATTERS; (3) ARAB GOALS THIS TIME ARE MODERATE BY COMPARISON WITH 1967; (4) WHATEVER THE OUTCOME, THE FIGHTING WILL CHANGE FRAMEWORK OF EVENTUAL MIDDLE EAST NEGOTIATIONS AND SETTLEMENT. GOF ATTITUDE, AT LEAST AS REFLECTED IN COMMENT BY FOREIGN MINISTER DURING FIRST 48 HOURS OF CONFLICT, HAS DRAWN BOTH SUPPORT AND VIRULENT CRITICISM. END SUMMARY.

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1. "A WAR LOST IN ADVANCE", HEADLINED COMBAT, WHOSE EDITORIAL TOOK NOTE OF GREATER LOSSES ON BOTH SIDES THAN IN PAST CONFLICTS, OF LARGER RESOURCES POURED INTO THE BATTLE, OF THE PARTICIPATION OF OTHER STATES "BECOMING A REALITY". ONLY PROSPECT PAPER COULD SEE WAS THAT OF "ADVENTURE, WITH ALL THE UNCERTAINTIES WHICH THAT IMPLIES". THE "RESPONSIBLE POWERS", COMBAT DECLARED, "WHICH ONCE AGAIN LOOK ON FROM AFAR, CAN NOURISH NO ILLUSIONS: THE FIRE MAY GAIN NOT ONLY THE MIDDLE EAST, BUT PART OF AFRICA, AND BECAUSE OF OIL MAY BRING GRAVE ECONOMIC TROUBLE FOR WESTERN NATIONS". TWO OTHER PAPERS INTERPRETED ISRAELI BOMBING OF SYRIAN CITIES AND PORTS, AND THE ABANDONMENT OF "BAR-LEV" LINE, AS CONFIRMATION THAT ISRAEL'S OPERATIONS ARE RUNNING INTO SERIOUS OBSTACLES, AND MOST PRESS MEDIUMS PREDICTED A LONG AND PAINFUL CONFLICT.

2. SECURITY COUNCIL'S DELIBERATIONS DREW CRITICISM FROM ALL SIDES. "IMAGINE", A TELEVISION COMMENTATOR ASKED HIS AUDIENCE TUESDAY EVENING: "IT TOOK THEM THREE DAYS EVEN TO HOLD THE FIRST MEETING, AND EVEN NOW THERE IS NO PROSPECT FOR A DECISION.". LE MONDE ("ONCE AGAIN, THE BIG POWERS HAVE DISPLAYED THEIR IMPOTENCE"), COMBAT ("LAMENTABLE PERFORMANCE"), AND LA NATION " AT THE UN, DIPLOMACY IS MARKING TIME") ALL JOINED IN DEPLORING EVENTS IN NEW YORK. FOR LA NATION (WHICH IS UDR ORGAN), US AND SOVIET UNION " HAVE SHOWN THEMSELVES MORE PREOCCUPIED WITH "LIMITING THE DAMAGE THAN IN FINDING A SOLUTION" -- EVEN THOUGH PAPER RECOGNIZED THAT ANY SOLUTION AT MOMENT WOULD BE A "MIRACLE". RUSSIANS AND AMERICANS, IT SAID, ARE TRYING TO KEEP EVENTS WITHIN LIMITS SET BY THEM "FOR INTERNATIONAL DETENTE IN GENERAL AND FOR THEIR OWN RELATIONS IN PARTICULAR". COMBAT WROTE: "IT HAS BECOME CLEAR THAT A PERSISTENT DIPLOMATIC DEADLOCK OVER THE MIDEAST CONFLICT MIGHT BE DETRIMENTAL TO THE FRIENDLY COMPLICITY OF THE TWO SUPER POWERS SUCH AS RESULTS FROM THE NIXON-BREZHNEV ACCORDS."

IN THIS CONTEXT, LA NATION, LIKE MOST OTHER NEWSPAPERS IN PARIS UNDERLINED KISSINGER CALL (IN PACEM IN TERRIS SPEECH) FOR MOSCOW TO AVOID "IRRESPONSIBLE" ATTITUDE; IT CITED INTERPRETATION OF THIS BY "HIGH OFFICIALS OF DEPARTMENT OF STATE" AS AN APPEAL TO KREMLIN TO BEHAVE RESPONSIBLY, AND NOT AS A WARNING.

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3. SOVIET STANCE TO DATE APPEARS TO FRENCH PRESS OBSERVERS AS MODERATE, WITH MAJOR CONCERN NOT TO UPSET RELATIONS WITH U.S. AURORE SAW "PROGRESS" IN MOSCOW'S ATTITUDE SINCE 1967 WAR, AND DEVOTED BOX TO BREZHNEV MESSAGE TO BOUMEDIENNE; ARTICLE'S BURDEN WAS THAT BREZHNEV NOT ABOUT TO LET HIMSELF BE DRAGGED THIS TIME INTO "HIGH BIDDING" BY ARABS. "SOVIET REINFORCEMENTS? NOT A CHANCE. BREZHNEV IS URGING HIS FRIEND BOUMEDIENNE TO SACRIFICE HIMSELF BY INTERVENING. IN REALITY, SOVIET UNION IS FAR FROM

THE ARAB BATTLEFIELDS. IT HAS ITS OWN PROBLEMS... SINCE 1967,
MOSCOW HAS PUT A LOT OF ICE IN ITS VODKA. THE RUSSIANS HAVE
BECOME 'RESPONSIBLE' AND 'REALISTIC'..." LA NATION AGREED,
SAYING THAT MOSCOW APPEARS TO BE TAKING MODERATE COURSE; MESSAGE
TO BOUMEDIENNE APPEARED MORE AS.../....IRWIN

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PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 PM-07 NSC-10 SS-15 NEA-10

AF-10 IO-15 DRC-01 /112 W
----- 066042

P R 101756Z OCT 73
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3889
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY ROME
USNATO 3189
USEC BRUSSELS 8603

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"APPEAL FOR FRATERNAL SOLIDARITY AMONG ARABS THAN AN INCITEMENT
FOR ALGERIAN MILITARY INTERVENTION", PAPER SAID.

4. SOVIET "MODERATION" WAS ONE THEME OF LE MONDE EDITORIAL
WHICH SAW IT FITTING RATHER NICELY WITH "VOLUNTARILY MODERATE"
JUSTIFICATION GIVEN BY ARAB STATES FOR THEIR CURRENT MILITARY
INITIATIVE -- NOT TO THROW JEWS INTO THE SEA, SAID LE MONDE,
BUT TO "RECOVER THE LOST TERRITORIES". PAPER DREW CONTRAST
BETWEEN SUCH ARAB "MODERATION" AND ACCUMULATED "IRRITATION"
AROUND THE WORLD AT "RIGIDITY" OF ISRAELI DIPLOMATIC POSITIONS UP
TO NOW, IT ADDED THAT, WHILE TEL AVIV CONTINUES TO ENJOY CONSIDER-
ABLE SYMPATHY, ESPECIALLY IN EUROPE, SOME GOVERNMENTS HAVE, ALL
THE SAME BECOME MORE "CIRCUMSPECT" TOWARD ISRAEL.

5. IN REFLECTION ECHOED BY SEVERAL OTHER COMMENTATORS, LES

ECHOS EDITORIAL SAW "SURPRISING" ARAB PROGRESS IN MILITARY TECHNIQUES AND EFFECTIVENESS, AND ASKED WHETHER THIS HAS ENABLED THEM TO OVERCOME CHRONIC " INFERIORITY COMPLEX". LES ECHOS CONCLUDED THAT, EVEN IF ARAB SIDE SHOULD LOSE, IT WILL BE UNDER CONDITIONS VERY DIFFERENT FROM THOSE OF SIX YEARS AGO. "ARAB UNCLASSIFIED

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PUBLIC", IT SAID, "WILL BE ABLE TO SAY THAT, AFTER CERTAIN NUMBER OF YEARS AND AT THE PRICE OF ADDITIONAL TRAINING, THEIR ARMIES WILL BE ABLE TO WIN THE FINAL ROUND. THERE, WITHOUT DOUBT, IS A DYNAMIC ELEMENT WHICH WILL COUNT IN THE NEGOTIATIONS TO COME." WRITING ON SAME SUBJECT IN LE MONDE, FOREIGN EDITOR TATU STATED THAT IF CEASE FIRE IS PROCLAIMED ON STAND-STILL BASIS, WITH EGYPTIANS IN PLACE ON EAST BANK OF CANAL, THIS ARAB PRESENCE IN SINAI "WILL CHANGE ALL THE GIVENS OF THE EQUATION". IN FIGARO, ON THE OTHER HAND, RAYMOND ARON FELT SADAT MAY HAVE HAD NO FIXED OBJECTIVE IN LAUNCHING HIS OFFENSIVE, NOR WAS VICTORY NECESSARILY VITAL TO HIS THINKING. FOR ARON, SADAT WAS TRAPPED IN FIXED NON-WAR SITUATION THAT WAS BRINGING HIM NOTHING, NEW MILITARY OPERATIONS, EVEN THOUGH NOT SUCCESSFUL," WOULD BREAK THE ICE", AND EVERYTHING WOULD AGAIN BE POSSIBLE."

6. CONSIDERABLE CONTROVERSY SURROUNDED COMMENT BY FOREIGN MINISTER JOBERT, MADE DURING FIRST HOURS OF WAR IN RESPOSE TO TV REPORTER'S QUESTION . JOBERT SAID : "DO YOU THINK THAT TRYING TO GET BACK INTO YOUR OWN HOME AMOUNTS TO UNEXPECTED AGGRESSION ?" DEFENDING JOBERT, LE MONDE SAID "ONE CAN HARDLY TALK ABOUT AGGRESSION, MUCH LESS "UNEXPECTED AGGRESSION, WHEN A STATE DEPRIVED OF ITS POSSESSIONS TRIES TO RECOVER THEM. THIS IS EXACTLY WHAT M. JOBERT WANTED TO SAY ". ON RADIO LUXEMBOURG, HOWEVER, WIDELY-HEARD EDITORIALIST JEAN FERNIOT WAS UNEQUIVOCAL : " FRANKLY, THESE WORDS SHOCK ME... I UNDERSTAND PERFECTLY WELL THAT FRANCE WANTS TO PRESERVE HER FRIENDSHIP WITH THE ARAB WORLD. AND I HAVE RESERVATIONS ABOUT ISRAELI POLICY. BUT I HAVE TROUBLE UNDERSTANDING WHY THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT EXPRESSES ITSELF ON SUCH A SERIOUS MATTER WITH OFFHAND CAPRICE. WITH US, THIS IS BECOMING A HABIT AND IN MY OPINION, A BAD HABIT, A MANIA. THAT M. JOBERT DID NOT CONSIDER EITHER SPEAKING BEFORE THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OR STATING THE GOVERNMENT'S FEELING IN A COMMUNIQUE FROM THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS MAKES ME ILL."IRWIN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: WAR, PRESS COMMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 OCT 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: n/a
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 JAN 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973PARIS26437
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: PARIS
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19731041/aaaabdtw.tel
Line Count: 215
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: ECTED IN COMMENT BY FOREIGN MINISTER
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: kellerpr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 AUG 2001
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <20-Aug-2001 by phillir0>; APPROVED <17-Jan-2002 by kellerpr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: FRENCH PRESS AND MIDEAST WAR SUMMARY: APART FROM VOLUMINOUS FACTUAL AND PHOTOS COVERAGE
TAGS: PFOR, XI, XF, FR
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005